Boating Fatalities
Boating Fatalities photo detail

Cover Photos: (Courtesy of FWC)

On Friday, March 8, 2019, at approximately 7:00 pm, a 21-foot-vessel was operating on a plane in Hendry Creek. While proceeding upstream, the 52-year-old operator failed to successfully navigate a turn causing the vessel to run aground and collide with several mangrove trees. The operator was ejected without wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) and later recovered floating face down in the water. He was administered CPR by Lee County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) and transported to Health Park Hospital by EMS, where he subsequently died from the extent of his injuries. According to the Medical Examiner’s Office, the preliminary cause of death was drowning. Conditions that contributed to his death were blunt trauma of the head and neck. Alcohol was a contributing factor in this accident, the operator had an unlawful blood alcohol level. Toxicology confirmed elevated ethanol concentrations (0.170 g/100 ml).
2019 Boating Fatalities

2018 Fatalities - Top Ten States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2019 statistics for top 10 states were not available at time of printing
Source: U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Division (recreational fatalities)

Florida Total Fatalities Recorded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registered vessels</th>
<th>Fatality rate</th>
<th>Number of fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>961,266</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>950,740</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>944,162</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>931,450</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>915,713</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fatality Rate – Number of fatalities per 100,000 registered vessels

Investigating Agency

- Sheriff's Office: 2 / 3%
- FWC: 56 / 97%

*58 fatal accidents
**2019 Boating Fatalities**

**Accidents By Month**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Accidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time of Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Accidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0:00-1:59 am</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:59 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:59 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:59 am</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:59 am</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:59 am</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:59 pm</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-3:59 pm</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:59 pm</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-7:59 pm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:59 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:59 pm</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*58 fatal accidents involving 65 fatalities
Fatality data includes four missing persons where their disappearance is associated with a boating accident

**Accident Types**

- Struck by skeg/prop: 1
- Skier mishap/fall: 1
- Grounding: 1
- Fire/explosion (fuel): 1
- Fall on PWC: 1
- Collision with floating object/person: 1
- Flooding(swamping): 3
- Collision with vessel: 3
- Collision with fixed object: 6
- Capsizing: 7
- Other: 10
- Falls overboard: 23

*58 fatal accidents involving 65 fatalities (Based on first harmful event)
2019 Boating Fatalities

Operation at Time of Accident

- Cruising: 28
- Rowing/paddling: 10
- Drifting: 10
- Other: 7
- Changing direction: 2
- At anchor: 2
- Changing speed: 1
- Docking/undocking: 1
- Docked/moored: 1
- Launching/loading: 1

*63 vessels involved in 58 fatal accidents with 65 victims

Accident Site Location

- Ocean/gulf: 15
- River/creek: 13
- Lake/pond: 12
- Bay/sound: 11
- Canal/cut: 4
- Port/harbor: 3

Restricted Area Accidents

- Other: 11
- Slow speed: 4
- Manatee slow speed: 1
- Idle speed: 1
- MPH limit: 1

*18 of 58 fatal accidents occurred in restricted areas. “Other” may include areas where the regulation or local ordinance was not specified.
2019 Boating Fatalities

Vessel Ownership

- Rented: 3 / 5%
- Borrowed (not in household): 9 / 14%
- Owned: 51 / 81%

Vessel Fuel & Hull Type

- Gasoline: 44
- None: 14
- Diesel: 3
- Electric: 2
- Fiberglass: 47
- Aluminum: 8
- Rubber/vinyl: 5
- Other: 2
- Steel: 1

Vessel Propulsion, Length & Type

- Propeller: 43
- Manual: 14
- Water jet: 6
- < 12 Feet: 14
- 12 - 16 Feet: 14
- 17 - 21 Feet: 14
- 22 - 26 Feet: 10
- 27 - 40 Feet: 10
- 41-65 Feet: 1
- 66+ Feet: 1
- Open motorboat: 34
- Canoe/kayak: 8
- Personal watercraft: 6
- Other: 5
- Cabin motorboat: 5
- Rowboat (Jon): 2
- Pontoon: 2
- Sail (aux): 1

*58 total fatal accidents involving 63 vessels
2019 Boating Fatalities

Primary Cause of Death

- Drowning: 43 / 66%
- Trauma: 12 / 19%
- Other: 10 / 15%

Male: 64 / 98%
Female: 1 / 2%

*65 fatalities, “Other” category includes 6 missing where cause of death is unknown

Operator Gender

- Male: 64 / 98%
- Female: 1 / 2%

Operator Age (in years)

- Less than 17: 1 / 2%
- 17 - 21: 4 / 6%
- 22 - 35: 16 / 25%
- 36 - 50: 12 / 18%
- 51 + years: 32 / 49%

Operator Experience (in hours)

- Unknown: 12 / 14.5%
- Under 10: 9 / 14%
- 10 - 100: 11 / 17%
- Over 100: 33 / 64.5%

*65 operators
2019 Boating Fatalities

On July 28th at approximately 9:00 pm, two vessels were on the Indian River in a head on situation. V1, an 18-foot open motorboat, and V2, a 20-foot open motorboat, both turned to the east side of the river. V1 struck the port bow of V2 and ramped on to V2 striking both occupants. The 51-year-old male operator of V2 was ejected and died because of injuries at the hospital. The 53-year-old female occupant received lacerations and contusions from being struck by V1. A female occupant on V1 jumped overboard with a child before impact, she received contusions and sprains from impact with the water, the child and operator of V1 were uninjured.

Operator Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boater education</th>
<th>No boater education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 / 20%</td>
<td>52 / 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operators by Age Without Formal Boater Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Operators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 - 21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51+</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*52 operators did not have any formal boater education

Victim Statistics (Ejected)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not ejected</th>
<th>Ejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 / 49%</td>
<td>33 / 51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victim Statistics (Wearing PFD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wearing PFD</th>
<th>Not wearing PFD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 / 12%</td>
<td>57 / 88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victim Statistics (Swimming Ability)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can swim</th>
<th>Cannot swim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37 / 57%</td>
<td>28 / 43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*58 fatal accidents involving 65 victims
2019 Boating Fatalities

Victim Residency

- Non resident: 8 / 12%
- Florida resident: 57 / 88%

Victim Gender

- Male: 59 / 91%
- Female: 6 / 9%

Victim Age

- Less than 6: 2 / 3%
- 6-16: 22 / 35%
- 17-21: 14 / 21%
- 22-35: 36 / 50%
- 36-50: 16 / 25%
- 51+: 28 / 43%

Alcohol/Drug Related Accidents

- Alcohol/drug use: 13 / 22%
- Other causes: 45 / 78%

Alcohol/Drug Related Victims

- Alcohol/drug use: 21 / 32%
- Other causes: 44 / 68%

*58 accidents involving 65 fatalities
(Alcohol/drug related refers to any accidents in which alcohol or drug use may have been a contributing factor, whether legally impaired or not)
2019 Boating Fatalities

Primary Cause of Accident by Reviewing Authority

- Other: 27
- Alcohol use: 10
- No proper look-out/inattention: 5
- Machinery failure: 3
- Operator inexperience: 2
- Excessive speed: 2
- Skier or occupant behavior: 2
- Standing on gunwale, bow or transom: 2
- Hull failure: 2
- Sharp turn: 1
- Overloading: 1
- Weather: 1

*58 fatal accidents

State Waters vs. Offshore Waters

- Offshore defined as the edge of the Gulf Stream or three miles from shore, whichever is greater, in the Atlantic and more than nine miles out in the Gulf